



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

CHAE F. EASLEY  
GOVERNOR

LYNDO TIPPETT  
SECRETARY

June 12, 2001

MEMORANDUM

To: W. S. Varnedoe, PE  
State Maintenance and Equipment Engineer

From: J. M. Lynch, PE  
State Traffic Engineer

Subject: Compressed Natural Gas Alternative Fuel Signing

We have investigated your request for installing freeway signs for compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling stations across North Carolina such as the one operated by the City of Hickory. The North Carolina Supplement to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD; p. 76-78) and American Association of Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guidelines for the Selection of Supplemental Guide Signs for Traffic Generators Adjacent to Freeways (p. 6-7) note that County and City Facilities or Publicly Owned Commercial Businesses do not normally warrant signing on freeways. Further, such an urban facility would not likely generate the 250,000 trips needed to qualify as a major traffic generator as specified in the North Carolina Supplement to the MUTCD (p. 79). Upon investigation by Division forces, this facility is located in Hickory's business district, and is accessible via a series of one way streets. Hence, it would be unlikely that unfamiliar motorists would be able to sufficiently navigate to the facility from I-40 or from I-40 to the facility. Due to the above, we recommend against signing this facility on a general service sign (e.g. CNG FUEL NEXT EXIT) or a supplemental guide sign.

The state Administrative Code for Gas stations and "associated services" on general services signing or specific service signing (Logo) include the following criteria: the business shall have a public telephone, appropriate licensing (as required by law), vehicle services for fuel, motor oil, tire repair and water, restroom facilities and drinking water, an on-premise attendant, and year-round operation at least sixteen continuous hours per day, seven days a week (19A NCAC 02B.0221 and 19A NCAC 02E.0219). "CNG Fuel" stations would also require gasoline (conventional fuel) available for the public in the

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CENTURY CENTER COMPLEX  
BUILDING B  
1020 BIRCH RIDGE DRIVE  
RALEIGH, NC

event of any motorist confusion with typical "Gas" general service or Logo signs. Since the Logo signing program is for businesses and the Hickory facility is publicly owned and operated, and there are currently no specific provisions for CNG facilities in the current Administrative Code, we recommend against signing this facility using Logo signs.

Please advise if we can be of further assistance.

JML/TMH/RWK:aia

cc: M. L. Holder, PE  
T. M. Hopkins, PE  
J. F. Permar, P.E.  
R. W. King, PE  
(Attn: A. I. Alqudwah)  
R. D. Chandler, P.E.  
S. C. Nichols